



Speech by

JACK PAFF

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

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TOWNSVILLE INDUSTRIAL PARK

Mr PAFF (Ipswich West—ONP) (6.45 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. My first question must be: why would anybody voluntarily develop an industrial park, including provision for a lead smelter, in the catchment area of a dam which supplies the vast majority of drinking water supplies for the Townsville/Thuringowa area? Why do the consultants of the Department of State Development not listen to the local residents in respect of the floodwater flow over the land in question that feeds Landsdowne Creek which, in turn, feeds the Ross River Dam? Locals have seen the flows and know the history, but the consultants are relying on computer modelling of hydrology and water flows. I suppose it is obvious that a computer model will invariably be more accurate and reliable than the experiences of ordinary bushies who have spent their entire lives in the area!

The Houghton River also drains part of this area and its waters flow to the rich cane growing areas around Giru. Mr Kevin Ryan of Lime Hills, Calcium has stated in a submission that his family's freehold property of 2,436 hectares supports three households making a good living from the property without subsidies from the Government. Over the years judicious introduction of improved pasture and small cropping have virtually drought proofed the property. Unfortunately, the 800 hectares of land, which the Townsville industrial land project intends to compulsorily acquire, just happens to include the most improved areas of the property as well as the three residences.

Considering this information, it is difficult to reconcile the assertion in the report to the Department of State Development that, on a scale of one to four, the land at Woodstock is considered to be only a one, that is, it is considered to be poor quality agricultural land, even though it supports three families. Why is it that a group of consultants who are no doubt paid huge amounts of public money can make a decision on the viability or quality of agricultural land based on a single site soil sample? One might be led to think that the decision had already been made and the so-called site selection process was something of a farce.

Much of this land has been held in families for many years. I point out that classes of agricultural land and their preservation was introduced by the Goss Labor Government in 1992. It is not just a block of land in the bush to these people, although it may be that to politicians and bureaucrats in Brisbane and to the boards of multinational companies overseas who see it as simply an opportunity to make money. To the people who have lived on this land for many years it is home. It is their roots. No Government has the right to take that heritage away from them simply to give financial gain to third parties.

If this was the only land that was suitable for industrial development, the Government may have some argument. However, that is not the case. This land is not ideal for the developments proposed. Does it not strike anyone in the Government as ludicrous to suggest the establishment of a sugarmill hundreds of kilometres from the nearest commercially grown cane? How about establishing an aquacultural industry many kilometres from the ocean and on the same site as a lead smelter? I am sure the eventual consumers of the products of this industry would not be impressed with the possibility of contamination of their food by a lead smelter.

Surely this Government and members of this House in general must be cognisant of the difficulties of life in rural and regional areas. Why would the Government then persist with a misguided

project in an area in which it is patently not wanted and to which it is not ideally suited when land is available in an area which is suitable and where the community would welcome the potential employment opportunities? Such an area is the Bowen district. This district not only wants it but also deserves the economic assistance such a development would bring. If the Government is in any way fair dinkum about the bush, it will support this motion.
